

Chapter 1

Transportation **Action Plan**



Transportation has always been integral to Atlanta's identity. We began as Terminus — the end of the railroad line. We are now known by many as the central transportation connection for air travel. The conception and execution of these transportation connections has always been a precursor to the growth and economic success of the region. However, a lack of investment in projects that benefited the City economically over the past 60 years has resulted in a City of Atlanta that has not kept pace with the region's phenomenal growth.

If we are to remedy this imbalance we must embrace new notions of mobility. We must rethink investment patterns constructed to the way we lived in the past and find the resources to build the infrastructure needed for the way we will live in the future. **We must empower the City to gain control of its own destiny.** Failure to alter our course will not only leave us stranded in congestion and beholden to unstable fuel prices and regional projects — we will not be able to change our economic cycle to address our City needs such as schools, housing costs, health and safety.

Currently transportation is a barrier to living the way we wish to live. Only by investing in transit, modernizing our outdated street network, and designing our streets for all users (not just cars) can we change the trajectory of the past 60 years to create the most livable City in the United States by 2030. This report argues that such a goal is within our grasp if we are willing to act boldly.

Connect Atlanta Plan

Build Transit Infrastructure

- 1 Build rapid transit infrastructure to areas of growth
- 2 Build a transit terminal for commuter and intercity rail

Improve Existing Transit Service

- 3 Fundamentally rethink transit routes
- 4 Diversify rail and bus fleet
- 5 Provide travel alternatives in congested areas

Promote Sustainable Travel Modes

- 6 Build and maintain sidewalks
- 7 Build a system of bicycle routes

Untangle 'Hot Spots'

- 8 Partner with private redevelopers
- 9 Create and manage alternative travel routes
- 10 Pursue goods movement strategies

Achieve a State of Good Repair

- 11 Fix infrastructure fast
- 12 Manage intersections
- 13 Fix Bridges

Develop New Funding Sources

- 14 Coordinate Funding and Administration of the Plan

Our Plan Initiatives

Build Transit Infrastructure

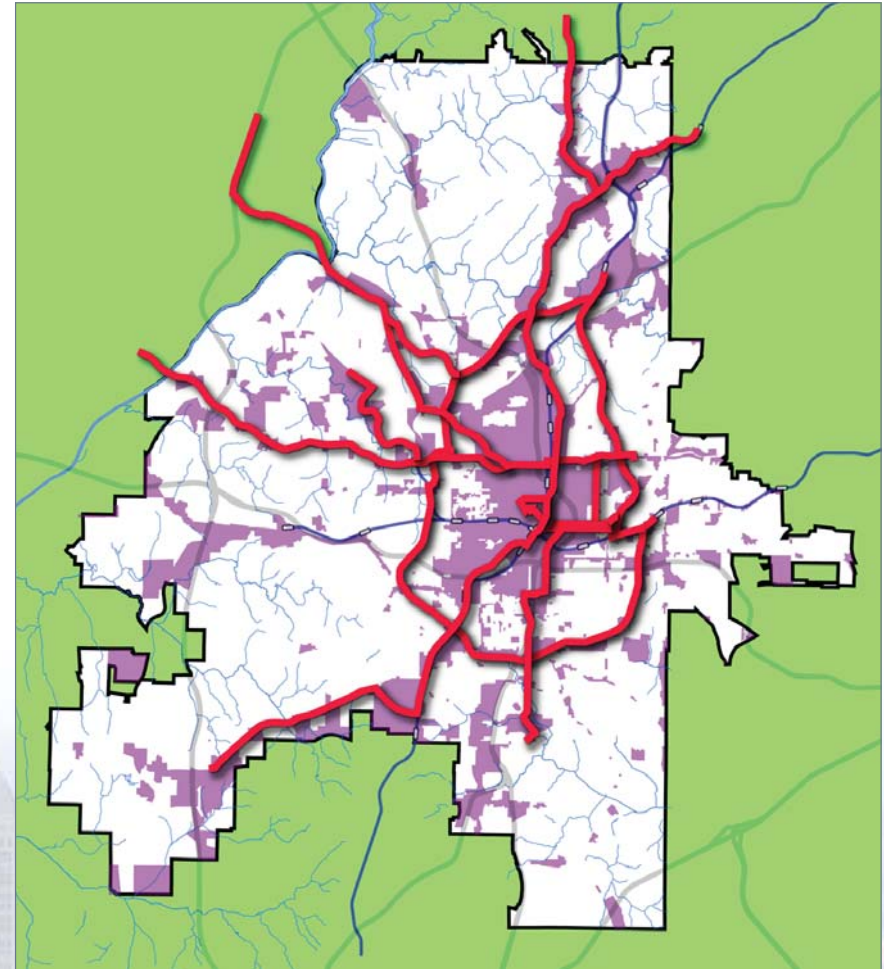
The City of Atlanta's provision of transit has not kept pace with highway building and has not provided the types of balanced options required for the functioning of a dense urban area. This infrastructure imbalance must be remedied.

1 ***Build rapid transit infrastructure to areas of growth***

The historic “travel-demand” based model which tried to forecast and accommodate all travel movements that might occur throughout the Atlanta region then dealing with the consequences later has likely reached the peak of its usefulness. This study switched to a “market-based” approach of identifying areas within the City with the potential to grow successfully and targeting what infrastructure would be required to achieve success. Connecting these growth areas via transit will be a key element of that success formula.

2 ***Build a transit terminal for commuter and intercity rail***

Beyond the connectivity needs within the City, Atlanta will continue to be a hub of government and employment for the region and for the southeastern United States. A connection point to all of these economic and social partners is needed in the form of a multi-modal transit passenger terminal. Construction of this terminal should be a top economic priority of the City and the State.



The red lines denote corridors to be served by rapid transit. Linking Atlanta's future growth areas with transit infrastructure gives them travel options to support additional population and employment. This investment in infrastructure demonstrates the City's commitment to maintaining its prosperity and vitality.

Build Transit Infrastructure

Improve Existing Transit Service

Atlanta's once promising transit system is showing its age. It must be updated and modernized to respond to who we will be in the future rather than who we were in the past.

3 ***Fundamentally rethink transit routes***

Transit routes within the City are too poorly coordinated and illogically connected to be of use to most choice riders. Long term priorities for the system should be geared to a “centers and corridors” model that connects high density nodes with rapid transit lines and gives most users a two-seat ride for most City origin-destination pairs.

4 ***Diversify rail and bus fleet***

The rapid transit system described in the previous paragraph should be supported by “neighborhood feeders” that provide short rides from areas of lower density to stations on the rapid lines. Once linked into the rapid system riders could expect, on average, the same two-seat ride to most City destinations.

5 ***Provide travel alternatives in congested areas***

All areas of the City with higher built density should not only have balanced access to the rapid transit system, but a full complement of safe and effective sidewalks and bike facilities to make use of that transit viable.



Neighborhood transit routes that ‘feed’ to higher-capacity transit stations are important service, but Atlanta should also rethink routes to provide direct access along major streets connecting commercial and employment centers.

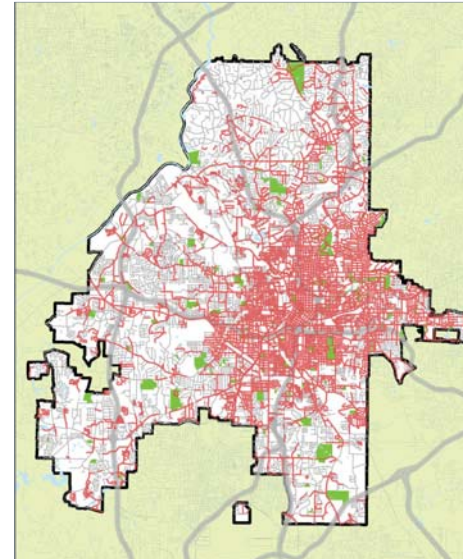
Improve Transit Service

Promote Sustainable Travel Modes

Given the instability in motor fuel prices that can be expected to continue for the foreseeable future, Atlanta cannot gamble that cars will be sufficient to handle all mobility needs.

6 ***Build and maintain sidewalks***

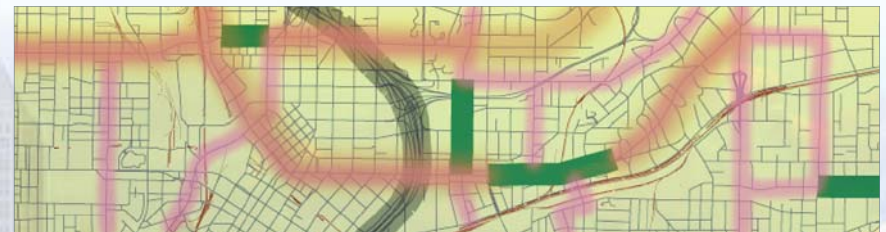
The City must take responsibility for building and maintaining a world-class pedestrian environment. All other investments geared toward changing travel behavior to be more sustainable will fail unless massive improvements in this area are accomplished.



Our plan calls for the addition of sidewalks beyond the areas of the City already served by them (as indicated in red lines above) and maintenance of those sidewalks we already have. This investment will make Atlanta a more walkable (and thus more livable) place as it continues to grow.

7 ***Build a system of bike facilities***

In order to compete with peer cities such as Washington, D.C., Denver, Seattle and even Chicago, Atlanta has to make investments in health and quality of life that allow us to continue to be seen as a place of choice. Bike facilities provide mobility for children going to schools, families going to parks and commuters riding to work.



The expansion of Atlanta's bicycle network, which is presently completed only in separate pieces, will help to make cycling a safe and widely appealing way of travel— to work, to school, and to recreation.

Sustainable Travel Modes

Untangle ‘Hot Spots’

Most drivers intuitively recognize that congestion resides at intersections. Managing what happens at these bottlenecks can be an important part of alleviating frustration that is evident to all users of the system.

8 ***Partner with private redevelopers***

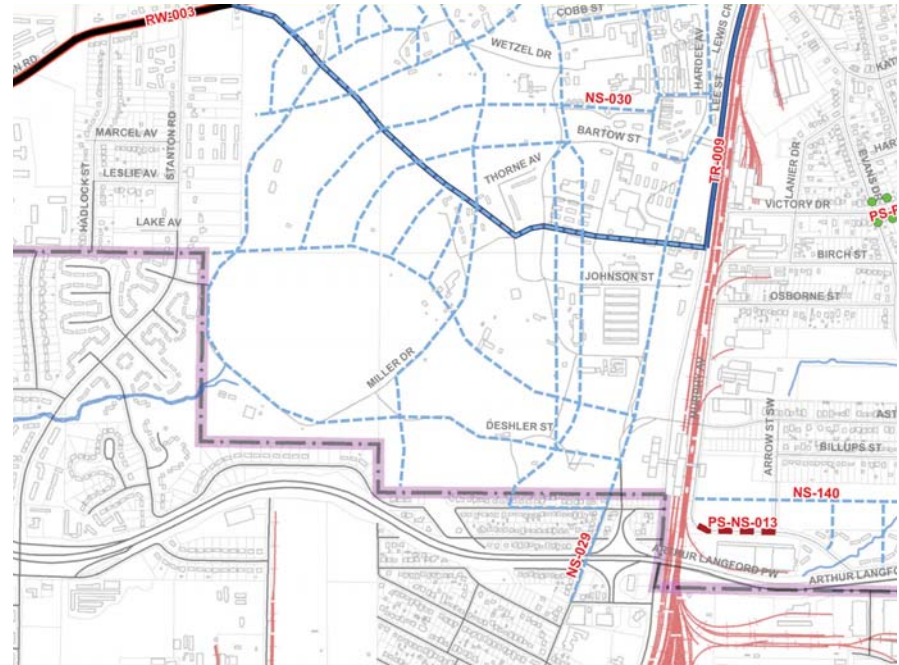
Many of the City’s most congested intersections are surrounded on four corners by commercial space that will redevelop over time. When that redevelopment occurs, the City will be in a position to rethink the street form and network to create more options for drivers, pedestrians and transit users.

9 ***Create and manage alternative travel routes***

Atlanta is a city whose streets were largely based on ridge lines and meandering rural roads. As a result, very few areas of Atlanta have the sort of redundant network of streets that allow people to choose different routes and allow various street functions to complement one another. The City needs to proactively go about creating new and redundant street network both in partnership with those who redevelop properties and as public works projects.

10 ***Pursue goods movement strategies***

Goods and freight movement to, from and through Atlanta are critical to the City’s economy. The City’s policy should be to preserve the bulk of freight rail corridors in the City and to incentivize both increased rail freight movement and track capacity within existing corridors. The City’s interstate corridors and an updated truck route map will sufficiently maintain movement of goods by truck.



This process has resulted in a “street master plan” that will allow any citizen, developer or city staff person to quickly understand what new connections are envisioned and who will be responsible for building them.



Some of Atlanta’s greatest traffic congestion occurs at intersections with few travel alternatives. Our plan explores how to untangle these confluences and how to work with private developers to maximize the return the City will enjoy on its investment in infrastructure.

Achieve a State of Good Repair

11 Fix Infrastructure Fast

The City, its contractors and its agency partners must redouble efforts to make timely repairs to street, sidewalk and transit infrastructure so as to minimize downtime to the system. Among the policies the City should adopt in this area are strict time limits on street and sidewalk closure permits and quick removal of metal street plates.

12 Manage Intersections

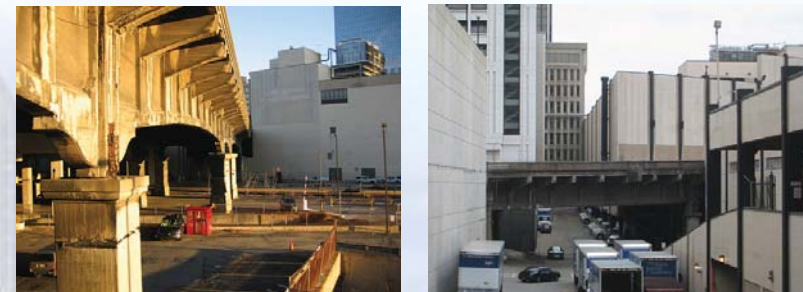
Congestion resides at the City's intersections. The City should take a more proactive role in assuring that traffic signal equipment is functional and in good repair and that timing plans which balance the needs of pedestrians and drivers from all approaches are in place. In areas where pedestrian demand is likely to be significant, the City should insist on crosswalks on each intersection leg and discontinue the need for push buttons to activate pedestrian signals.

13 Fix Bridges

Bridges throughout the state of Georgia are in disrepair, and Atlanta is no exception. In fact, bridges in the City are often older and carry more traffic than in other parts of the state. This situation, if not remedied has the potential to cause a substantial loss of mobility, increase in congestion or, in the case of a failure, more catastrophic results. The City must make it a priority to remove, repair or replace all of the deficient bridges within its limits. The State of Georgia must be compelled to be a full partner in this undertaking.



Fast and efficient maintenance and construction within the public right-of-way keeps the City moving.



Bridges and viaducts are a critical part of the City's fabric that has long been neglected.

State of Good Repair

Develop New Funding Sources

14 *Coordinate Funding and Administration of the Transportation Plan*

The City must identify a sustainable source of local transportation funding and develop an organizational structure that facilitates the collection and management of this funding. A transportation management structure that is capable of identifying priorities, working with agency partners, and managing interaction with private sector developers should be created.

New Funding Sources

What Can We Be?

What do we get if we find the courage to invest in these new ways?

- Improve transit reach from 70,000 **to 500,000 residents** (a 600% increase) within a 10 minute walk of rapid transit
- Improve **bike access to greenspace** from 1000 acres to 3400 acres
- Reduce average block size in unprepared “growth areas” by 25%
- Add over 60 miles of **new street network**
- Add over **300,000 new people** that are **within a 20-minute commute** of Downtown, Midtown and Buckhead employment
- Retimed and **functional traffic signals**
- 900 miles of **new sidewalks**
- Safe bridges
- Sustainable menu of revenue sources

What Can We Be?